

Hawaii Cadaver Dog Proposal

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Problem: Locate historic and prehistoric Hawaiian burials on Oahu over a 20 mile area where rapid transit will be sited.

Proposal: Use trained, experienced cadaver dogs with experienced handlers to locate grave sites. Do a one-week feasibility study to see if this would work over the entire distance.

Day 1: Introduce the dogs to known sites and train on those sites.

Days 2-7: Work the dogs at selected areas along the corridor.

Working time would be from 0600 to 1100.

All areas would have double coverage. In order not to influence a dog's behavior, handlers would not know where another dog had interest. A third handler will observe both dogs' behaviors.

Area choices and preparation:

Jaucus soils are sandy and would not require preparation.

Roadways and concrete slabs: Probe sideways under the slab with a metal rod or soil probe. If the area is large, drill holes through the concrete or asphalt. Allow to vent for at least a day, and then have the dogs check.

GPR and electromagnetic: Ground Penetrating Radar and electromagnetics can point out anomalies in the soil where dogs could check.

Dog Handlers

CT State Trooper Andy Rebmann, Kent, WA, developed the cadaver dog program in the United States in the late 1970's. He is the author of the Cadaver Dog Handbook. He has trained all of the three handlers that would be coming to Hawaii. (His young dog, Carlo, does not have enough experience to do the search in Hawaii.)

Marcia Koenig, Kent, WA, has trained and handled search dogs for over 30 years. She and Andy teach search dog classes all over the world. With her previous dog she has conducted searches on Guam, Oahu and Hawaii. Her young German Shepherd Raven has been in training for the past two years on cadaver, including training on old bones, on materials in concrete, and in an old cemetery prior to 1900. She has been on cadaver searches.

Kathy Holbert, Philippi, WV, has trained dogs in the military. In her civilian life she trains dogs and handles dogs for a living. Kathy trains dogs for police departments, drug dogs and explosives dogs in addition to training trailing and cadaver search dogs. Her current dog, Strega, a German Shepherd has been on cadaver searches with many finds. She has also trained in cemeteries with graves ranging from 1789-1920's. Her search unit's certification test includes a 48-hour burial of a bone up to 12" deep.

Lisa Higgins, Pearl River, LA, has been a cadaver dog handler for over 15 years. She and Marcia responded to Hurricane Katrina with their dogs as members the Disaster Mortuary Response Team. Lisa is currently under contract with the FBI to do cadaver searches for them. On one of their searches her Australian Shepherd, Maggie, located two native American graves from 1690-1730 buried 18" deep. Maggie alerted outside a brick house. Underneath the house was the urn burial. The house had been built over an Indian mound. The soil was Mississippi clay, which is not very porous. In addition, Maggie has been exposed in training to prehistoric burials 8"-2' deep and Confederate soldier's graves.

Logistics

Three handler/dog teams come to Oahu for 7 days of work. I've chosen three because we want to give double coverage of all areas. My prior experience on out-of-area searches that last several days is that a dog may get ill or injured or not be able to work all 7 days. With three dogs, we should always have two working and probably three.

I have chosen Kathy Holbert, Lisa Higgins and myself because we are all experienced dog handlers, we have worked together prior to this on classes (Kathy and Lisa are also instructors for Andy Rebmann's K9 Specialty Search Associates) and on searches. We can also read the body language of each others' dogs.

We would require coverage of all expenses, three motel rooms, meals and transportation plus an honorarium (TBD) for each handler.

I do not know how the quarantine regulations have changed, but I was accompanied by an agricultural agent my first trip to Oahu. That responsibility was given to the police officer when I went to Hawaii the next month. This would have to be determined in advance.